

Seishin Shotokan
精神
Karate

How Does Karate Help Me Develop Discipline and Self-Control?

I'm glad that people have started to ask this question because it is not inherently obvious how the practice of punches and kicks can lead to greater discipline and self-control. In fact it almost seems like a paradox that the practice of martial arts could possibly develop calm, assured and highly disciplined individuals. Are we all falling for the hype that is touted in the popular martial arts magazines or is there really some truth to the claims of improved discipline and increased self-control?

Just like anything else lasting change must come from within. No matter how much we all think a person should change they will only change if they believe it is necessary and no amount of karate training will alter this. However if you have an individual who has acknowledged that he or she needs some more discipline and self-control then the martial arts can definitely help. Also if a parent sees that their child is out of control more often than they are in control then martial arts can certainly provide a possible solution. This is how and why a positive turnaround can happen.

Martial arts provide a very structured training system and methodology for teaching the various techniques and drills. Structure is essential for improving discipline and just by being exposed to set parameters, rules and clear goals a person can begin to understand the importance of discipline.

Learning karate is often very attractive to an unruly and angry individual because it seems like the ideal method to learn how to hurt and punish others. If such an individual joins a reputable dojo (karate school) he will quickly realize that the martial arts are not really about this at all, however he should also realize that many people within the dojo possess exceptional self-defense skills yet show tremendous self-control. This type of leadership by example can often have a very positive effect on somebody who initially has set off down the wrong path.

All people need some kind of guidance from a higher authority while they find their own way in this world. Many young people unfortunately turn to gangs to find this kind of brotherhood but a martial arts school can offer an alternative solution with far more desirable results. The authority figure is of course the instructor and if he or she has the right charisma and calming presence about them, this can be very inspiring to a young person looking for some guidance in life. Strong discipline and self-control in this positive but challenging environment will be natural by-products of the overall experience.

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Discipline comes from making a decision to commit to something that is deemed valuable.

Becoming a black belt in any martial art has many positive connotations and benefits. There are numerous stories of current black belts and even high-ranking instructors who turned their whole lives around through their involvement in the martial arts. Probably every martial arts school in the country has at least one student on their roster who can attest to this fact.

Self-control comes from having respect for one another. One of the core tenets of the martial arts is respect and if you want to guarantee a swift exit from your karate school then not showing respect to your instructor and your fellow members is a sure way to achieve this. Conversely through understanding the importance of respect for everyone around us our self-control cannot fail to improve.

All of the above are, in my opinion, some very clear reasons as to how and why the martial arts can provide a very positive and enriching experience to everyone who begins their journey on the path to self-improvement.

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